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Sri MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : May I know, Sir, whether any price has been fixed by the Government for the purchase of rice and, if so, what it is?

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : Yes, Sir. Prices have been fixed. It is at that rate that the purchases are made. These prices are applicable to all transactions whether by Government or others. I do not have the figures of prices now. The prices are fixed according to the varieties of rice and also the varieties of paddy.

Sri MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Supposing there is disparity between the price fixed by the Government and the price prevailing in the market, what happens? Are the stocks going to be requisitioned? Or, how will the Government be able to procure their necessary stocks?

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : Dealers are required to sell or purchase only at the prices fixed. They should not exceed the maximum fixed. If anybody contravenes the rules, he will be liable to action being taken against him.

Sri T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Sir, in some districts, the wholesale merchants refuse to purchase paddy. Has this been brought to the notice of the Government?

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : No, Sir. I saw a report in the Press that the wholesale merchants of Salem had proposed nto to co-operate with us, and to give up their business. I do not know how far they meant it.

Sri MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Sir, may I know whether the purchases are made in all the districts of the State or are confined only to districts like Tanjore?

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : Sir, price control is applicable to all the districts. It is also proposed to make the purchases in all the districts.

Sri MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Supposing there is resistance on the part of the big millers or mirasdars to part with their stocks, anticipating better prices later on, what happens? In that contingency, will the Government requisition such stocks?

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : In such cases, the Government have got powers to requisition. And Government do propose to requisition such stocks.

Overloading of bullock carts

* 89 *Q.*—Sri T. PURUSHOTHAM : Will the Hon. the Minister for Home be pleased to state, with reference to the answer given to the supplementary question to Legislative Council Starred Question No. 14 on 2nd November 1957—

(*a*) the steps taken by the Government to effectively check the overloading of bullock carts and bullock trucks; and

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(*b*) whether any action has been taken for prevention of cruelty to draught animals by the use of whips and sticks and to place on the table a copy of the regulations, if any, issued in this behalf?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : (*a*) Instructions have been issued recently that drivers of bullock-carts or bullock-trucks should be made to exhibit the weight of the unladen cart or truck, either by stamping or showing the unladen weight in a prominent place on the cart or truck itself and that they should also be made to declare the weight of loads, if and when demanded.

(*b*) The Government have recently examined the question of amending the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1890, to prevent overbeating and whipping of draught animals and have decided that no amendment is necessary as the existing provisions in the Act are sufficient to prevent cruelty to animals and provide for deterrent punishment in such cases. No regulations have been framed.

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM : Sir, have the Government considered the specific recommendations of the Committee for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals appointed by the Government of India, and what action has been taken on its recommendation on this particular question of overloading?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : The Government have not only considered these recommendations, but also considered the various proposals submitted by these organisations and also by the officers of the Government, and they have taken this decision, which I mentioned in my answer to clause (*a*).

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM : Sir, has not the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Madras, represented its difficulties in enforcing the rules issued by Government and what action do the Government propose to take in regard to the suggestions made by them?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : I have no information whether the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has pointed out any specific difficulties. If such difficulties are pointed out, the Government would look into them and see that the Society is enabled to prevent effectively the cruelty to animals.

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM : As there is specific difficulty in detecting cases of overloading to the satisfaction of magistrates as there are no weighbridges available in Madras City and also in the mufassal municipalities, will the Government consider the question of providing such weighbridges in important centres?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : In Madras City, the Corporation can provide for weighbridges, and ,he Society can make use of them in co-ordination with the Corporation. It is not

practical to provide weighing machines in the mufassal. But, still, Sir, excessive load could easily be found, and it could be actually weighed, and then action could be taken.

DR. A. LAKSHMANASWAMI MUDALIAR : Sir, is there any difference in weight between bullock-carts with rubber tyres and those with ordinary tyres?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : Yes, Sir. If it is bullock-cart with rubber tyres, double the load that is allowed normally could be permitted.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Sir, is the Hon. Minister aware that apart from the excessive load in bullock-carts, there is very heavy overloading in carts drawn by men? He would himself have witnessed this on the roads of Madras City.

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : Yes, Sir. That is a different matter and a different question.

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM : Sir, apart from the question of the activities of the S.P.C.A., will the Government consider the enforcement of the rules issued by them through the Police, especially in the case of heavily loaded bullock-carts, the panting bullocks that we see going on the First Line Beach dragging heavy loads to and from the Harbour?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : Yes, Sir. The matter is being looked into.

S.S.L.C. Public Examination

3-20 p.m. * 90 *Q.*—DR. A. CHIDAMBARANATHAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Finance be pleased to state—

(*a*) the reasons for not conducting at present examinations in Tamil on the first day of the S.S.L.C. Public Examination;

(*b*) whether it is a fact that, as soon as Tamil was made the First Language in 1948, examinations in Tamil were held on the first day of the S.S.L.C. Public Examination; and

(*c*) whether there is any proposal before the Government to change the schedule for conducting examinations in the First Language on the first day of the Public Examination?

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM : (*a*) & (*b*) The regional language, including Tamil, was made the first language under the scheme of study of languages for the S.S.L.C. Examination in 1948. The examination in the first language was accordingly held on the first day of the examinations held in March 1948. But as the examination in the regional languages has to be conducted in various languages in addition to Tamil, certain practical difficulties were experienced in conducting the examinations on the first day of the examinations. Hence, this arrangement was dropped.

(*c*) No, Sir.